

Foster Care and Adoption

S U C C E S S F U L F A M I L I E S

THE MARTINEZ FAMILY

Taking the time to make a difference.

Precillia and Eli Martinez are relative newcomers to foster care. In fact, they received their first child just a little over a year ago. While they may not have years of experience to reflect back upon, their obvious dedication to the children in their care and enthusiasm for the Foster Care Program makes them powerful advocates for foster parenting.

the implications — with their children. Precillia says she and Eli told them, “There are going to be children coming into our home who need a lot of love and attention, and we are going to try and give them what we give you — love from the heart.” Precillia and Eli were pleased to discover how easy it was for their children to share their home and love with these new family members.

Making the decision.

A friend who thought Precillia’s past experience operating a daycare center would make her a great program participant actively recruited her for the Foster Care Program. While her friend was effective, Precillia concedes it wasn’t the first time she and her husband had discussed becoming

foster parents. “My husband is involved in special ed,” Precillia says. “Sometimes he helps students deal with difficult family issues. At one time, we actually talked about having a student live with us so he could help her through an especially tough time.” While Precillia and Eli didn’t have the student live with them, they did make the decision to participate in Idaho’s Foster Care Program.

Precillia and Eli have three children of their own living at home: a 13-year-old boy and two girls ages 12 and 10. When they decided to become foster parents, they discussed the subject — and

Fostering change.

The family’s first experience with foster care involved a young boy who stayed with them for two months. Next was a toddler who stayed just eight days before returning to his grandparents. Both were good experiences that confirmed their decision to become foster parents.

The third child presented more of a challenge. It was three or four weeks before the child felt comfortable enough to openly express feelings. Precillia remarks, “I said, ‘It’s not good to hold it in, everyone cries, even me.’” The safe and loving environment provided by the Martinez family made it easier for the child to feel more secure. Consequently the child was more confident about entering into new experiences excluded by their previous life, such as regular attendance at school.

Today, the child is doing well. “We’re all one family,” Precillia says. “The children get along together and love having a younger child in the house.”



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*– Precillia Martinez,
foster care provider*



On making the commitment to make a difference.

Foster parenting is not always easy. One of the toughest things about being a foster parent is dealing with the feelings of attachment for the foster child. Precillia is philosophical: "Someday the child may leave us, but I don't think about that. Instead, I think about having the child with us now — and that's enough."

There are other considerations, as well. Like most parents entering the Foster Care Program for the first time, Precillia and Eli were apprehensive about the possible impact a foster child might have on their family. "Of course you think about what could happen — the problems — but really it has gone very well," she says. "We learned if you do have problems there are always case workers or program staff available to help you, so you're never really alone."

Even though the child currently in their care is young — 5 years old — the family would like to help older children between 6 and 12 years of age. Generally it is more difficult for the Foster Care Program to find foster families interested in caring for older children, especially children in their teens. That's unfortunate, because the older the child the greater the need for caring adults who can offer guidance and understanding.

Supporting foster care is important for everyone.

The Martinez family is committed to helping children in need. Precillia and Eli were involved in the formation of Foster and Adoptive Care for Every Soul (FACES), a support group for foster families living in the Caldwell area. Their biological daughter, Bianca, designed the logo for the support group.

When asked how long they intend to remain in the Foster Care Program, Precillia insisted they will remain as long as they can make a difference. That difference includes actively recruiting other parents for the program. Precillia has a friend who has been thinking about foster parenting for some time. "I told her she needs to fill out the paperwork and do this," Precillia says. "She's had the enrollment packet for a few months. She said, 'You have a big heart — not everybody can do it.' I told her, 'Anybody can do it, as long as you have a heart,' and I believe that."

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